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Mr. V. T. Arasu:—"Planting industry is such a wide term which may mean anything. But what is the purpose of the research?"

The hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan:—"I must have notice of the question."

Selection of Christians and members of the depressed classes for admission into the Agricultural College, Coimbatore, in 1931 and 1932.

* 139 *Q.*—Mr. M. Devadasan: Will the hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) how many candidates applied for admission into the Agricultural College at Coimbatore in the years 1931 and 1932;

(*b*) what the principle adopted is in the selection of candidates for the college;

(*c*) whether there were depressed classes and Christians among the applicants in the years 1931 and 1932;

(*d*) how many of them were chosen in each category; and

(*e*) how many of them were disqualified and, if so, on what grounds?

A.—(*a*) 321 and 180 fully qualified candidates applied for admission to the Agricultural College in 1931 and 1932, respectively.

(*b*) The selection of students entirely rests with a selection committee appointed by Government. As the College is intended for the scientific and practical training of those who intend to make agriculture their main profession, students are admitted without distinction of caste or creed. Endeavour is however made to ensure, as far as possible, that all parts of the Presidency are fairly represented.

(*c*) There were no depressed class applicants. The number of Christian applicants in 1931 and 1932 were five and ten, respectively.

(*d*) & (*e*) Out of five Christian applicants in 1931 only two candidates were present for the interview and they were both selected. Out of ten Christian applicants in 1932, five were present and four were selected, the other being considered by the committee not fit for selection.

Damage to coconut trees by the leaf pest.

* 140 *Q.*—Mr. M. S. Sreshta: Will the hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether representations were made to the Agricultural Department by the Collector of South Kanara and others that much damage was being done to coconut trees by the leaf pest;

(*b*) what action was thereupon taken;

(*c*) why the Pest Act was suspended some years ago;

(*d*) whether there are any statistics as to the amount of damage caused in the province by the leaf pest; and

(*e*) why the use of parasites to kill this pest was stopped?

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A.—(a) No representation except from the hon. Member himself was received by the department.

(b) Attention is invited to the answer given to clause (b) of question No. 86 asked by Mr. A. B. Shetty, on 2nd August 1933.

(c) Departmental operations were suspended with effect from 1st September 1931 as they had been in force in the infected areas for a sufficiently long time to enable owners of coconut gardens to have realized the advantages of the methods employed and to have understood the *modus operandi*. The Agricultural Demonstrators continue to demonstrate the remedial measures in those areas.

(d) The Government have no information.

(e) The breeding and liberating of parasites was stopped when the staff engaged on the work was disbanded on account of financial stringency.

Mr. M. S. Sreshta:—"With reference to the answer to clause (c), may I know whether the Government have ascertained whether the owners of coconut gardens have realized the benefits to be derived from the methods employed by the department?"

The hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan:—"I believe the ryots have realized the benefits and that is why they are going in for these methods."

Mr. M. S. Sreshta:—"Is the hon. Minister aware that in this matter the Government have to battle against the age-long prejudices of the ryots?"

The hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan:—"I do not think so, Sir, because in the area in which these operations are going on the ryots have successfully adopted the methods introduced by the department."

Mr. M. S. Sreshta:—"Will the hon. Minister call for a report from the Collector on the question whether the owners have realized the advantages?"

The hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan:—"I do not know whether the Collector can furnish the information."

Mr. M. S. Sreshta:—"May I know from him as to who can furnish the information?"

The hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan:—"Probably the Deputy Director of South Kanara can give the information."

Mr. M. S. Sreshta:—"Will the hon. Minister be pleased to call for the information from the Deputy Director as to whether as a matter of fact the public have realized the advantage of these methods?"

The hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan:—"I shall be glad to call for the information."